



# THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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## THE LIBERTY BOYS' DOUBLE VICTORY; OR DOWNING THE REDCOATS AND TORIES. BY HARRY MOORE.



"Here they are, a nice lot of redcoats and Tories, your excellency," said Dick, indicating the prisoners. "You have done well, Dick, my boy!" said the Commander-in-chief.

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## CHAPTER I.

### VALLEY FORGE.

It was the winter of 1777-1778.

General Howe and the British army occupied Philadelphia.

General Washington and the patriot army were at Whitemarsh, distant about twelve miles from Philadelphia.

General Howe was, at the particular time of which we write, in a great rage.

He was of a volatile, choleric temperament, yet, in the main, good-natured.

He would get angry quickly, and get over it just as quickly.

But now he had something to be angry about.

He had just sent his army out to Whitemarsh, with the intention and expectation of taking the patriot army by surprise and annihilating it.

When his army got there it found Washington's army drawn up in battle array, ready to give the British battle.

General Howe, who had accompanied his army, was angry and disappointed.

He made his army march and counter-march, in an attempt to take Washington at a disadvantage.

He could not succeed.

Washington foiled him at every turn.

There was some skirmishing, but Howe did not dare bring on a battle.

The patriot army was too well posted for him to take the risk.

Howe remembered how nearly he had come to being routed and utterly defeated by this same army not long before, at Germantown.

The patriot soldiers were ragged and ill-kempt; they were barefooted, and had not enough to eat; but they could and would fight.

Desperately, too.

Howe was aware of this.

So he gave ear to the whisperings of prudence, and gave the order to march back to Philadelphia.

This was done.

All the way back the British general brooded over the fiasco.

He wondered how Washington had known he was to be attacked.

The plan had been laid with the utmost secrecy.

The council had been held at night, in a private room occupied by one of the staff officers.

No person not a member of the staff had been present.

The plan had been discussed in low tones.

Great caution had been observed.

How, then, had the patriots got wind of the fact that an attack was to be made?

It was very simple, if Howe had only known it.

Dick Slater, who was the captain of a company of youths known as "The Liberty Boys of '76," and who was, in addition, the champion spy of the Revolution, had been in the house where the council was held and had been a listener to it.

His ear had been at the keyhole of the door during the council, and he had heard all the plans discussed.

He had hastened to Washington with the news, and the great general had made preparations to receive the British, with the result as already told.

By the time Howe and the army reached Philadelphia, the British general was in a bad state of mind.

He called his officers together and gave them a raking over the coals.

He said that some one had been indiscreet.

He declared that some one had made talk that had been gotten hold of outside, and the word had been carried to the patriots by some one in sympathy with them.

The officers insisted that they, each and every one, had been very careful, and that they had said not a word outside, but Howe refused to believe it.

He gave them all a scolding.

"We might have annihilated Washington's army," Howe said; "that would have put an end to the war. Now, it will drag on at least through the winter. One thing is sure, I shall make no further attempt to attack the rebels before next spring."

This did not seem to be displeasing to the majority of the officers.

They, like Howe himself, liked ease and comfort; they liked wine and they liked to dance and flirt with beautiful women—and all this could they do in Philadelphia.

The majority of the residents of the city at this time were loyalists.

They welcomed the redcoats with open arms.

They treated officers and soldiers royally.

Consequently there were as many pleased individuals as there were soldiers, when it was learned that the army was to settle down in Philadelphia for the winter.

Out at Whitemarsh things were not so pleasant, however.

The patriot soldiers were shoeless and almost naked.

It was with difficulty that they could get enough to eat.

The soldiers improvised moccasins out of the skins of the beefes, which were killed for food.

These were poor, rude makeshifts, but they were better than nothing.

Even then, not one in ten of the soldiers was enabled to have moccasins.

General Washington's heart bled for his men.

He saw how they were suffering, and the sight was torture to him.

He began looking around for winter quarters.

He felt sure that the winter's campaign was practically ended.

He did not believe Howe would make another attempt to attack him.

He thought it best, however, to go into quarters in as strong a position as possible.

After looking around for some time, Washington finally decided to march to Valley Forge and go into winter quarters at that point.

It was the strongest position anywhere in the vicinity.

He gave the order to break camp and start.

The men obeyed.

There was not much work to do in getting ready to march.

The army had very little baggage.

About all there was to move was themselves.

To move themselves was no light task, however.

There was snow on the ground.

As we have already stated, the majority of the soldiers were barefooted.

They marched through the snow to Valley Forge.

Their feet were cut, bleeding and frozen.

They left bloodstains all along the route.

They had to wade across the Schuylkill, through water cold as ice.

It was terrible!

Think of it!

We, who enjoy so many blessings, who live in comfort, have good, warm clothing to wear and plenty of good food to eat, should stop and think occasionally of what those brave men went through with, of what they suffered and endured, in order that we might be enabled to live in peace and comfort as we are doing to-day.

At last Valley Forge was reached.

There was no shelter there for the soldiers.

They would have to build houses.

They procured as many axes as possible and went to work.

They were, in the main, men who knew how to work.

Many of them were expert choppers.

They cut down trees, cut them up into logs and went to work building cabins.

Cabins went up with incredible rapidity.

While the work was going on, however, the soldiers had to sleep on the frozen ground.

They persevered.

Each brigade was located to itself.

The cabins were uniform in size.

They were laid out in regular streets.

Each cabin held sixteen men.

Bunks for this number were built in each cabin.

Each cabin had a huge fireplace.

In the army was a company of cavalry.

This company was made up of youths of between eighteen and nineteen years of age.

These youths built their cabins well up the side of a hill.

Back of their cabins they hollowed out a great place in the hillside.

This was for a stable for their horses.

The youths built six cabins.

This number would hold the youths nicely.

They were a wide-awake, lively set of youths.

Hardships such as would have driven many people desperate, and which told heavily on the majority of the stout-hearted men, could not extinguish the lively spirits of the "Liberty Boys."

They suffered quite a good deal, but they made believe that they did not.

"Just wait till we get the cabins finished, and fires started," said Bob Estabrook, a bright, handsome youth, and next to Dick Slater, the leading one of the Liberty Boys; "then we will be all right and in a position to bid defiance to Jack Frost and John Bull both!"

"You are right, Bob!" said Dick.

"Well, we will soon have the cabins finished," said Sam Sanderson.

"A couple of days more and we will be snugly quartered," declared Mark Morrison.

The youths looked forward to that time, and lived in anticipation.

They would not let themselves think of the present and its sufferings.

This is a good way to do, but it takes will power.

The youths were young and full of determination, however, and whatever they wished to do they were able to do—so far as such things as this were concerned.

It was an advantage which they possessed over the older men.

They could realize only the present and its sufferings.

The cabins were all built at last, however, and the men took possession.

Great quantities of wood had been cut.

Roaring fires were built.

This was so like solid comfort, as compared with the condition in which they had been for some time that the soldiers felt almost happy.

All they lacked now was good, wholesome food.

This was a scarce article.

The farmers of the surrounding country did not like to sell their produce to the patriot soldiers.

There was a good reason for this.

The patriots had nothing with which to pay—that is, nothing save Continental currency, and it was worth next to nothing.

One hundred dollars of it was worth only one dollar in gold.

And the farmers preferred the one dollar in gold, even then.

By driving to Philadelphia with their produce the farmers could get good prices and get their pay in British gold.

Howe and his soldiers were well supplied with money.

They were willing to pay good prices for good things to eat, too.

Therefore, the farmers much preferred to pass the patriots by and go on to Philadelphia with their produce.

This made it necessary for the soldiers to do something in the way of foraging.

There were many Tory farmers in the surrounding country.

These were singled out, as much as was possible, and their cattle, hogs, sheep and other food supplies disappeared.

The soldiers held a sort of jollification on this, the first night of their occupancy of the cabins.

The "Liberty Boys" had the jolliest time, perhaps.

As has been stated, the hardships which the patriots had been forced to undergo had not borne down so heavily on the youths as on the older men.

All their hardships were now forgotten, and the youths enjoyed themselves greatly.

They told stories, talked, laughed and sang songs.

They did not lie down until late, and when they did, they went to sleep very quickly.

They—as well as all the patriot soldiers—rested better that night than they had rested in many a night.

## CHAPTER II.

### A RICH HAUL.

"Here they come, Dick!"

"All right; I'm glad of it. It is cold work, sitting here."

"So it is. Well, we won't have to wait much longer."

A band of youths sat on horseback, just within the edge of the timber which bordered a road leading toward Philadelphia.

The youths were those widely known as "The Liberty Boys of '76."

They were at a point seven or eight miles southeast from Valley Forge.

They were on the main road leading from Paoli to Philadelphia.

It was early in the morning of a winter's day.

There was snow on the ground.

It was soon made evident who the "they" were that reference had been made to.

Four teams were seen approaching.

They were coming from the westward.

The teams were hitched to farm wagons.

That the wagons were well laden was evident.

The horses seemed to have about all they could do to pull the wagons along through the snow.

On came the teams.

Dick Slater, the captain of the company of "Liberty Boys," waited till the wagons were even with the youths, and then he gave the signal and the entire party of horsemen suddenly appeared.

They surrounded the wagons.

"Halt!" cried Dick. "Stop! You refuse to obey at your peril!"

The "Liberty Boys" had leveled their muskets.

The startled drivers lost no time in obeying.

They were farmers, not fighters.

Besides, even had they been the best of soldiers, it would have been folly for them to try to fight twenty times their own number.

"Who are you? Why have you halted us?"

Thus spoke up the driver of the leading wagon.

His tone was faltering, however.

It was plain that he was frightened.

"Who are we, you ask?"

Dick spoke sternly.

"Y-yes."

"I'll tell who we are: We are men who are fighting for our liberty against the hired minions of a tyrannical king. We are men who have fought thus without sufficient food, and we have decided that we will not go hungry in the midst of plenty."

"W-what do you mean?"

It was evident that the man guessed what Dick meant.

"You know what I mean. What have you in those wagons?"

The man paled.

He hesitated to answer.

"I know what you have there," said Dick; "you have corn, wheat, meats, potatoes, eggs and produce of all kinds—is it not so?"

The man saw it was no use to deny it.

He nodded.

"Yes," he replied.

"And you are on your way to Philadelphia, are you not?" Again the fellow nodded.

"We are."

"To sell your produce to the British, eh?"

The man colored somewhat.

"Yes," he admitted.

Dick eyed him sternly.

"I suppose you know that not more than seven or eight miles from here an army is stationed?" he queried.

"Yes, I know it."

"It is almost an impossibility for the soldiers to get enough to eat to keep them alive—did you know that?"

Dick's voice was stern.

The man fidgeted nervously.

"Well, no; I didn't know it wuz so bad as that," he said.

"Well, it is. We try to buy provisions of you farmers, and you tell us you have nothing to sell; and then as soon as our backs are turned you load up your wagons with all kinds of produce and drive away to Philadelphia and sell the stuff to the redcoats."

The man was silent.

"Do you think that is the way to do?" asked Dick.

"Wouldn't you do it?" the man asked.

"I most certainly would not," replied Dick, promptly.

"What, sell food to men who are here for the purpose of shooting down one's neighbors and friends? I think not!"

"It is simply business with us," the man said, sullenly; "we would as lieve sell to you as to them, but your money is no good. They have gold, and that is good anywhere."

"Don't you wish to be free?" asked Dick.

"We're free enough, I think," was the dogged reply.

"You think so, do you?"

There was scorn in Dick's tone.

"Yes."

"You think we are free enough—and we have been giving half that we earned to the king! I don't care for such freedom as that!"

"Opinions differ," the man remarked.

There was a tinge of insolence in the fellow's voice.

Dick detected it.

His eyes flashed.

He looked the fellow straight in the eyes, with a look that made him quail.

"That is as much as to say that you differ in your views from the ones I have given?" said Dick.

"Yes."

"Very good," in a stern voice; "your opinion shall cost you something. I suppose the other men think as you do?"

"Perhaps," in a growling voice.

"Very well; then it becomes necessary for us to treat you as enemies. You may consider yourselves prisoners!"

"What is that! Prisoners, you say?"

The man was pale now, and his voice trembled.

"You heard what I said. You are our prisoners!"

The other three who had listened to the conversation, but had said nothing so far, suddenly found their voices.

"I am not a king's man, sir!" one cried. "I am a patriot."

"And so am I!"

"And I!"

"They are as much king's men as I am," the one who had done the talking exclaimed, bitterly. "They are saying that to keep you from making them prisoners."

"It is not true!" cried one, hastily. "I am and always have been a patriot."

"So have I!"

"And I!"

"They are liars!" the fellow declared, spitefully.

"Perhaps they have changed their views recently," said Dick. "It may not be too late for you to do so."

"I won't do it! I am a king's man, and I don't care who knows it!"

"So much the worse for you, then!" said Dick, sternly. Then he turned to the other three.

"Why were you taking your produce to Philadelphia to sell it to the British, if you are patriots?" he asked of one.

"We are hard up," was the reply; "we need money, and the redcoats pay good prices for produce."

"I see; well, I am sorry, but this time I think we shall be forced to take possession of your stuff. There are hundreds of half-starved patriots up here in the encampment, and you should be patriotic enough to let this food go to them."

"We can't afford to do so, young sir."

"You will have to do so!"

"Good!" cried the Tory farmer. "Now you fellows see how much good it did you to lie and pretend that you were patriots. You are to be robbed the same as I am."

"We are robbing no one," said Dick, quietly; "these are war times, and we have to do the best we can. We cannot fight unless we have something to eat."

"Neither can we live if we get nothing for our produce," aid the Tory farmer.

"Oh, yes, you can. You don't have to have gold. You can live on the produce of your farms."

Then Dick gave an order to the "Liberty Boys."

They opened up so that the wagons could move forward.

"Drive on," ordered Dick; "go straight ahead till you come to the first crossroad, then turn to your left."

The Tory looked sullen, but he did not dare disobey Dick's order.

He started the horses and drove up the road, the other three doing likewise.

The "Liberty Boys" kept right alongside the wagons.

When the crossroad was reached the Tory turned to the left, as he had been ordered to do.

He cast a longing glance on up the road in the direction of Philadelphia.

Doubtless he was saying hard things regarding the "Liberty Boys."

Saying them to himself, of course.

He did not say anything aloud.

The "Liberty Boys" were very well satisfied with their morning's work.

There was a lot of provisions in the four wagons.

They had no scruples about taking the provisions.

They were confident the four men were Tories.

Three of the four had claimed to be patriots, but the youths did not believe they were.

It was a two-hours' journey to Valley Forge.

They got there, finally, however.

Their arrival created considerable excitement.

The soldiers were delighted.

They cheered for the "Liberty Boys."

The wagons were quickly emptied.

The youths were generous in the distribution of the provisions.

They did not keep the lion's share for themselves.

They apportioned the stuff out so that all shared about equally.

Of course, the officers came in for a handsome share.

When the wagons had been emptied, the owners were allowed to drive away.

This was done by order of General Washington.

"We do not wish to acquire any prisoners if we can help it," he said; "at least not till spring. We have too many mouths to fill already."

The four farmers were only too glad to get away.

They had expected that they would be held prisoners and to be allowed to go free was a welcome surprise.

They had expected that their horses and wagons would be kept also.

The horses would have to have feed, however, and Washington thought it best not to increase the number of horses already in the army's possession.

The soldiers came nearer feasting that day than for many a day.

That evening Dick was unusually silent.

The other "Liberty Boys" were talking, laughing and singing, but Dick had very little to say.

Bob noticed this, after a while.

"What's the matter, Dick?" he asked. "Why are you so quiet?"

"Oh, I was thinking, Bob," was the reply.

"You mustn't do too much thinking, old man," laughed Bob; "it isn't good for a person who isn't used to it, you know."

Dick smiled.

"I'll be careful and try and not overdo the thing, Bob."

"What are you thinking about, anyway, Dick?" queried Bob. "I will wager it is something of importance."

"I have thought of a scheme, Bob."

"I knew it! But what kind of a scheme is it, old man?"

"I am not ready to say as yet, Bob."

"Oh!"

"I haven't it worked out in my mind yet."

"I see. You'll tell me what it is when the time comes, then?"

"Oh, yes."

"Good! See that you do."

"I'll tell you, Bob. I will want your help."

"I'm mighty glad to hear it."

Dick was indeed pondering to some purpose.

He had been struck by an idea.

A big one, too.

The scheme which he had in mind would have to be carefully thought out, and the execution would also have to be perfect.

Dick was not sure the scheme which he had in mind would be practicable.

He believed it might be, however.

He would talk the matter over with General Washington.

If the commander-in-chief approved of the plan, Dick would go ahead with it.

If not, he would abandon it.

Dick hoped General Washington would favor it.

Dick went to bed early and lay awake for some time, pondering.

### CHAPTER III.

#### AN ENCOUNTER.

Next morning Dick had a conversation with General Washington.

Evidently the result of the conference was satisfactory, for when Dick came out of the house occupied by the commander-in-chief as headquarters, his face wore a pleased look.

He hastened back to the cabin in which he and Bob had their quarters.

He called Bob, Sam Sanderson and Mark Morrison to one side and had a long talk with them.

Immediately after dinner Dick mounted his horse and rode away.

He rode eastward and crossed the Schuylkill at Norristown.

Then he headed in a southeasterly direction down the river in the direction of Germantown.

Dick rode at a leisurely gait.

He was in no particular hurry.

He was bound for Philadelphia, but for obvious reasons he did not care about getting there before nightfall.

He would have to run the gantlet of the eyes of too many redcoats.

That is, if he were to enter in the daytime he would.

By entering at night he would avoid this.

Dick, in his role of spy, had penetrated within the lines of the British on many occasions.

He had been captured two or three times.

General Howe, a number of the British officers, and some of the ordinary soldiers knew Dick by sight.

Therefore, to enter Philadelphia in daylight would be dangerous.

He might be recognized.

Dick reached Germantown at six o'clock.

He stopped at a tavern and got supper for himself and feed for his horse.

Then he remounted and rode onward.

It was now dark.

Dick felt safe in entering Philadelphia.

It was half-past seven when he got there.

He rode at once to a livery stable and left his horse.

Then he made his way down the street.

The streets were crowded.

They were thronged with people, both soldiers and citizens.

The soldiers were for the most part having a good time.

The majority of them were drinking more than was good for them.

They swaggered as they walked.

They took up most of the sidewalks, and the citizen who happened to get in the way had to take to the gutter.

It happened that Dick got in the way of a squad of the redcoats.

He had turned halfway around to look at something that had attracted his attention, and while he was looking back the redcoats in question came along.

They saw their opportunity.

Here was a citizen standing right in their way.

It was too good a chance to be lost.

One of the redcoats made a gesture to attract the attention of his comrades, and then bumped against Dick with all his force.

Dick was not expecting anything of this kind.

He was utterly unprepared for it.

Had he been braced he might have withstood the shock. But he was not braced.

The result was that he was hurled off the sidewalk.

He went into the gutter.

He did not fall, but he came very near it.

His hat flew off.

He had hard work getting straightened up.

The redcoats shrieked with laughter.

They roared.

They ha! haed! at a great rate.

It was great fun for them.

The one who had bumped against Dick was, of course, he best pleased one of the lot.

This was natural.

He thought he had done something smart.

Several of his comrades patted him on the back and cried "Good boy!"

But, had the redcoat known it, he had made a mistake.

He had picked upon the wrong person.

True, he had succeeded in shoving Dick off the sidewalk, into the gutter.

But he would not have succeeded had he not taken the youth unawares.

Dick was angry.

He did not like redcoats, anyway.

To be shoved off the walk into the gutter in this fashion was sufficient to make him angry.

But it was not so well calculated to do so as was the daughter of the redcoats after the thing had been done.

They so evidently thought they were smart, were so evidently confident of their superiority that the youth's blood boiled.

He leaped back onto the sidewalk.

He did not take time to get his hat.

That could be attended to later on.

He had other business to attend to now.

"You cowardly, sneaking scoundrel!" cried Dick, his voice ringing out loud and clear. "You think you are smart, no doubt, but I will prove to you that you are not so smart as you think you are. Take that!"

"That" was a blow straight from the shoulder.

Dick's fist caught the redcoat fair between the eyes.

The blow was a strong one.

The redcoat must have thought so.

He went down as if he had been struck by a piledriver.

His head went down, his heels flew up.

He struck the sidewalk with a crash.

Then Dick whirled on the fellows who had just been laughing so loudly.

He faced them with flashing eyes.

"Now, you laughing hyenas, if there are any more of you who wish some of the same kind of medicine, you can have it!" the youth said.

There was such a fierce expression on Dick's face and in his eyes that the redcoats shrank back.

Only for a moment, however.

They were four or five to one.

Were they to be awed by that one?

Certainly not!

At least, they so decided.

Simultaneously a growl of rage escaped the redcoats.

"Knock the fellow down!"

"Go for him, fellows!"

"Give it to him!"

Such were a few of the cries given utterance to.

Then the redcoats leaped forward.

They attacked Dick in a body.

Of course, they expected to beat him down by superior force.

The thought that the youth could stand before them doubtless never entered their heads.

Such an idea would have been considered absurd.

But they were soon to learn that this young fellow who confronted them was no ordinary individual.

Had he been, they would have easily overcome him.

As it was, they found they had encountered a tartar.

In a contest of this kind Dick was at his best.

The reason was, because he was so quick and active.

He was a veritable human will-o'-the-wisp.

Wherever the redcoats thought to find Dick there was where he was not.

He evaded the redcoats with wonderful ease.

He ducked, dodged, evaded, leaped backward and to one side, and then the other, with such wonderful quickness that the redcoats could not land on him to do any harm.

And all the time Dick was striking out strongly, fiercely.

Not all of his blows took effect.

But many of them did.

And whenever Dick landed a blow, the recipient knew it.

Dick knocked the redcoats down, one after another.

They got up as quickly as they could and came back for more.

They were game enough.

But they were, even collectively, no match for Dick.

The fact of the matter was that Dick, by skillful work, managed to make the redcoats get in each other's way.

They were thus hindered by their own number.

Of course, a great crowd collected.

This is always the case in affairs of this kind.

It was just as true in those days as it is in these.

Human nature was the same then that it is now.

Human nature has always been the same; it will always remain the same.

Manners and customs vary in different countries of the world and among different peoples, but the people are practically the same.

They have the same hopes, fears, wishes and desires.

In fact, human nature is the same the world over, and was the same in the year 1 that it is in the year 1901.

Therefore it was not strange that the combat should attract a crowd.

The crowd was made up of soldiers and civilians.

It was about evenly divided in this respect.

Of course, the soldiers—or the majority of them, at any rate—were in sympathy with their comrades.

A few, however, fair-minded fellows, sympathized with Dick, owing to the fact that he was only one against half a dozen.

They could not help admiring him for the manner in which he was more than holding his own against the red-coats.

Sympathy among the civilians was in the main with Dick.

This was owing to the fact that Dick was one against several, and also because of the fact that the soldiers had made themselves somewhat disliked on account of the high-handed manner in which they had been conducting themselves on the street.

There were many encouraging remarks made for Dick.

"Go for them, young fellow!"

"Give it to them!"

"Knock them down!"

"They need a lesson!"

"That's right!"

"Well, he's giving them one!"

"So he is!"

"I hope he will give them a good beating!"

Some of the redcoats in the crowd took exceptions to some of the remarks made by the citizens, and for a while it looked as if there would be a general free fight.

The interest in the combat between Dick and the red-coats was so great, however, that the redcoats and the citizens in question did not come to blows.

They decided that it was more pleasant to watch the combat.

The five or six redcoats who were engaged in the encounter with Dick were beginning to present a sorry plight.

They were badly bunged up.

Several had blackened eyes; the faces of two or three were covered with blood, Dick having dealt them blows on the nose.

As they went down, once, twice and even thrice, the courage of the fellows began to ooze out.

They began to think this young fellow was the Old Nick himself.

The courage of the redcoats diminished rapidly.

It was not to be wondered at that this should be the case.

They had each been hit a number of times, and had been knocked down several times in turn, and yet they had not been able to deal the youth a damaging blow.

They had tried hard enough.

There was no doubt regarding this.

They had done their best.

They had tried coming to close quarters with their live opponent.

But they could not do this.

They had tried to surround him and approach him from three or four directions at once.

They had failed in this, also.

Still they fought on, hoping against hope that they might presently be able to get in a blow or two that would put the youth down.

Should they succeed in doing this they would speedily conquer him.

They would all leap upon him then and pummel him till they were satisfied.

In their present state of mind they would, no doubt, have injured Dick.

But the youth's blood was up.

He did not intend to let them get this advantage.

He realized that it would indeed go hard with him if the redcoats should succeed in getting him at a disadvantage.

Therefore he was determined that they should not succeed in doing so.

The redcoats grew weaker and more disheartened.

It was plain to the spectators that they were about ready to give up in despair.

Doubtless they would have done so within a few moments, and Dick would have been at liberty to go on his way unmolested, but a sudden diversion came.

A redcoat, who had just appeared and who had worked his way through the crowd to a point where he could see Dick, gave utterance to an exclamation of wonder and amazement.

"Great guns, fellows! That is Dick Slater, the rebel spy!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

To say that this announcement created a sensation would be putting it mildly.

There was not a redcoat within the hearing of the soldier's voice who had not heard of Dick Slater.

Many of the civilians had heard of Dick.

The redcoats knew that General Howe would give his eyes, almost, to have Dick Slater a prisoner in his power.

They knew that General Howe laid the failure of many of his best-laid plans at Dick's door.

The youth had, through spying inside the British lines, discovered the intentions of the British, and by carrying the information to General Washington, had made it possible for the patriots to checkmate the moves of the British.

The redcoats in the crowd knew, also, that Howe had offered a reward of five hundred pounds for the capture of Dick Slater.

This was a good deal of money.

It was sufficient incentive to make them work hard to make the capture.

Of course, they would have tried to capture the youth, anyhow, but the money consideration would make them work harder than they otherwise might.

The instant he heard the words uttered by the redcoat, Dick knew he was in great danger.

He was surrounded by a great crowd.

This crowd was made up to a considerable extent of redcoats.

It would seem as if it would be impossible for him to escape.

But Dick was not the youth to despair.

He would at least make the attempt to escape.

But how was he to do it?"

If he got away it would have to be by quick work.

Dick was one who was quick to see, quick to decide, quick to act.

He flashed a look all around him.

On three sides were the crowd.

The spectators were packed so tightly it would be impossible to get through with anything like celerity or quickness.

The fourth side was the wall of a residence building.

The building, as was the case in many cities in those days, came right flush out to the sidewalk, the same as business buildings do nowadays.

The flashing glance which Dick cast in that direction was sufficient for him to see something which surprised him.

It filled him with joy, too.

The front door of the house had opened slightly—perhaps six inches or so.

Dick saw a face there—the face of a girl, he was sure. He also saw a beckoning hand.

It said, as plainly as words could have done, "Come!"

Dick had a friend in Philadelphia!

More, and better still, he had a friend close at hand.

It was utterly and entirely unexpected.

But no matter.

Dick was quite ready to take advantage of the circumstance.

In his experience as a spy he had learned to do this without stopping to ponder the whys and wherefores.

Safety first, the other things afterward.

This was Dick's motto.

The flashing glance of Dick's, the opening of the door, the appearance of the face, the beckoning hand, all took place in an instant, of course, and immediately after the startling announcement made by the redcoat, to the effect that the youth was Dick Slater, the "rebel" spy.

There were a few persons between Dick and the doorway. Perhaps there were half a dozen.

Three or four of them were redcoats.

This did not matter to Dick.

He acted so quickly as to take all by surprise.

Right on the heels of the redcoat's statement, seemingly, Dick leaped forward toward the doorway.

He knocked down two of the redcoats.

He hurled the other two aside, as they tried to stop him. He reached the door at a bound.

The face of the girl had disappeared.

Dick was glad of this.

He did not wish anyone to get into trouble on his account.

He wished the redcoats to think he had entered the house entirely of his own accord.

This would absolve the inmates from blame.

It would keep them from being interfered with in any way, or mistreated.

Dick was at the door so quickly that it is doubtful if a person in that whole crowd took note of the fact that the door was slightly open already.

Dick pushed the door open.

He leaped through the doorway.

A sudden realization of what was taking place came to the redcoats.

They realized that the youth was in a fair way to escape. This must not be allowed.

They must prevent it.

They gave utterance to cries of anger, and leaped forward.

They tried to grasp Dick.

They were not quick enough.

The youth was to and through the doorway before they could catch hold of him.

The instant he was across the threshold Dick slammed the door shut.

He shot a couple of bolts, making the door fast.

It was light enough so that he could see to do this.

Dick turned, to see a beautiful maiden of perhaps seventeen years standing before him, holding a lighted candle.

A cry of amazement escaped Dick's lips.

"Mildred!" he cried. "Miss Marshall, is it indeed you?"

"Yes, Dick; but come. We have no time to talk. Come, I will show you a place to hide."

The girl turned and walked rapidly along the hallway.

Dick followed like one in a dream.

He was so amazed that he was almost dazed.

The beautiful girl who was leading the way along the hall, and who had made it possible for him to escape the redcoats, just now, was an old friend.

Nearly a year before Dick had met her.

It was at Trenton.

It was just a few days before the battle of Trenton.

Dick had been sent into Trenton by General Washington, to spy on the British and Hessians.

Dick had gone into Trenton.

He had been so fortunate as to render the girl, Mildred Marshall, a favor.

He had found some Hessian officers accosting the girl on the street and asking that they be given a kiss.

Dick had knocked two or three of the fellows down, and they had fled, after which he had escorted the maiden to her home.

After the battle of Trenton, Dick had left there with the patriot army.

He had not been in Trenton since.

He had had no expectation of ever again seeing beautiful Mildred Marshall.

He had thought of her many times during the months that had passed.

Not that he had fallen in love with the maiden, for he had a sweetheart back at home, in New York, but for the reason that whenever he thought of the battle of Trenton he could not help thinking of the girl whose acquaintance he had made in such a peculiar manner.

Dick wondered what Mildred was doing in Philadelphia. He did not give the matter much thought, however.

There were other things to think about.

He was in danger.

He would have hard work escaping from the redcoats.

He must think of that.

Already, and before the two had halfway traversed the length of the hall, there came a thunderous rapping on the front door.

The redcoats had tried to open the door, undoubtedly, and had found it bolted.

They had then tried to burst it down by throwing themselves against it.

In vain.

The door was too strong.

It resisted all their efforts.

Then they began pounding on the door, making the racket heard by Dick and the maiden.

"Do you think the door will hold?" asked the girl, with an anxious, backward look.

"I think so, Mildred," replied Dick; "it will hold while, anyway."

"It need not hold so very long. Five minutes will be sufficient for our purpose."

"It will resist their efforts to break it down that long, I am confident."

"I hope so."

Dick hoped so, too.

The girl led the way along the hall to the extreme end.

Then she opened a door at the right-hand side and passed through the doorway, Dick following.

They were in what looked to be the kitchen.

The girl led the way across the room.

She opened a door at the farther side.

It opened upon a flight of stairs which led downward into the cellar.

She made her way unhesitatingly down the stairs.

Dick closed the door and followed.

As they reached the bottom of the stairs they heard a loud crash.

"They have broken the door down!" half whispered Mildred, turning pale. "We will have to hurry!"

"Where are we going?" asked Dick, as the girl hastened across the cellar.

"You will see—listen! Hear the trampling? The redcoats are in the house!"

The girl was evidently badly frightened.

Dick looked all around the cellar.

He could see no place that offered much in the way of a place to hide.

He thought that perhaps there might be some means of exit, however.

If he could get out he would risk getting away.

The trampling of feet could be heard now, plainer than ever.

The sound of excited voices could be heard also.

"Listen; hear them talking!" the girl whispered. "They will be down here in a few moments!"

They were now almost to the end of the cellar.

The girl paused in front of what seemed to be a smooth, solid wall.

She began feeling of the wall with eager, trembling fingers.

Dick watched her with wondering eyes.

What could the girl be trying to do?

Was she so frightened that she did not know what she was about?

Dick could not believe this.

The girl was pale, and she was undoubtedly frightened, but she seemed to have all her wits about her.

"Goodness! will I never find it?" the girl murmured, her voice trembling.

"Find what?" asked Dick.

"I'll show you in a minute—wait—ah! the cellar door—they have opened it! They are coming down into the cellar!"

Such indeed seemed to be the case.

Dick heard the cellar door open.

He felt sure that he would be captured, after all.

He glanced around.

There seemed to be no possible chance of escaping from the cellar.

He was disappointed.

His hopes had risen high when he had succeeded in getting away from the redcoats when hemmed in, out on the street.

Now to be practically cornered and helpless made him feel very bad indeed.

Footsteps were heard on the cellar stairs.

Luckily the cellarway was closed in and the door at the bottom had been closed by Dick, after they came through, so the light of the candle could not be seen.

Down the cellar stairs came the redcoats.

Dick could tell this by the sound of the footsteps.

In a few more moments the redcoats would open the door.

Then he and the girl would be discovered.

What should he do?

Dick asked himself this question.

But there seemed to be no answer to it.

He could see no possible chance of escape.

## CHAPTER V.

### A SAFE HIDING PLACE.

Just at the moment when Dick felt sure the hand of the foremost redcoat must be on the knob of the cellar door, he heard a sharp click.

Dick had been looking toward the cellarway, but now he turned to see what caused the peculiar clicking noise.

He almost uttered an exclamation of amazement.

The seeming solid wall of stone was not stone at all.

It was wood, and had been artistically painted so that it looked like stone.

There was a secret door, and Mildred had, after searching for a few moments, found the spring and opened the door.

The swift glance which Dick gave revealed this, and the further fact that there was the space of perhaps two feet between the seeming wall and the real wall.

"Quick; follow me!" the girl whispered, as she leaped through the opening.

Dick obeyed instantly.

He leaped through the opening.

Click!

The door went shut, the girl having pushed it to the instant Dick was through.

Dick glanced about him with interest.

He saw that they were in a narrow, hall-like compartment.

It was about two feet wide and reached clear across the cellar.

The compartment, room or whatever it might be termed, was used as a sort of storeroom, evidently.

There were all sorts of odds and ends in there.

It had been used as a hiding place, also, doubtless on many occasions.

Dick drew a breath of relief as he looked around at the girl.

"You have saved me from capture, Mildred!" he whispered. "You are a brave and noble girl."

The maiden blushed, and looked at Dick, shyly.

"I am only paying my debts," she whispered; "do you remember Trenton?"

"Indeed I do," whispered Dick. "I have thought of Trenton—and of a certain maiden there, many times during the past year, and have wondered if I should ever see her again. I little thought that I should meet her under such peculiar circumstances."

No more was said at that time.

The sound of footsteps and voices were heard in the cellar, and it was thought dangerous to even risk whispering.

Dick bent over, however, and, placing his mouth close to the girl's ear, whispered:

"I think you had better blow out the light. There might be a crack in the wall, and in that case the fellows might discover our presence here."

The girl nodded.

Then she blew out the light.

They were now in complete darkness.

They stood perfectly still and listened.

They could hear the redcoats talking.

The conversation between the soldiers could be heard as plainly as if the speakers were beside them.

The redcoats were discussing the escape of Dick.

"It beats anything I ever heard of," said one. "I don't see where the fellow can have gone."

"Nor I," replied another; "we know he came into the house, and the folks upstairs say he did not go through and out at the back door, they are confident."

"They said they didn't see him, Morgan; not that they did not think he went through and out."

"Yes, I believe that is what they did say."

"Well," said another, "it is plain he isn't down here."

"So it is. Let's go back up."

"Yes, and out the back way. It might be that the people of the house are patriots, and told us they didn't see the spy go through and out at the back door in order to delay us and keep us looking around in here till the young rascal gets clear away."

"There may be something in that. Come on!"

There was the sound of footsteps, and then the trampling of feet was heard on the stairs.

"Thank goodness!" breathed Mildred.

"You feel better, now?" asked Dick.

"Much better. I was afraid they might discover our hiding place."

"I was a little bit afraid they might, myself," admitted Dick.

"We had better wait a while before leaving here, had we not?"

"I think it would be wise."

"They might take a notion to investigate some more before leaving the house."

"So they might; but tell me, Mildred, how comes it you are here in Philadelphia?"

"I am here on a visit, Dick."

"Ah, on a visit?"

"Yes; to my uncle."

"I see; and this is the home of your uncle?"

"Yes."

"Well, it was fortunate for me that you happened to be visiting in Philadelphia, and fortunate that your uncle happened to live at this particular place."

"It would have fared badly with you, would it not? You were in close quarters out there."

"Yes, I was surrounded by redcoats. I doubt if I could have escaped."

"I am glad I was at hand to render you assistance, Dick."

"And so am I. I owe you my life, I have not the least doubt."

"Then we are more nearly even than we were. Think what I owed you."

"I did not do much, Mildred."

"You saved me from insult by those Hessians, that time."

"Any one would have done the same and accounted it a privilege, Mildred."

"But you risked your life as a result. You fought a duel with one of the Hessians."

"And that was a pleasure also, Mildred. I was glad of a chance to teach the fellow a lesson."

"I see you are bound you will not have any credit for what you did."

"Well, I shall consider that I am in your debt, Mildred."

"I shall not so consider it."

"Very well; we will say we are even, then, Mildred." The two waited perhaps fifteen minutes.

Then, hearing no sounds to indicate the presence of redcoats in the house, they left their hiding place.

"Had you not better remain down here till I go up and see if they have gone?" whispered Mildred.

"No; I will go right along with you," replied Dick. "I am sure they have gone."

"But they might have left one of their number behind to keep watch."

"Well, I will wait at the top of the stairs till you go and see if the coast is clear."

They made their way up the stairs, and Dick paused at the top while Mildred opened the door cautiously, and after looking out, passed through the doorway, closing the door behind her.

A few moments later Mildred returned.

"It is all right now," she said; "the redcoats have all gone."

"Good! I'm glad of that."

Then Dick and the girl entered the kitchen.

Mildred led the way across the room, out into the hall and along it to a doorway which opened into the parlor.

The lights were lighted in this room, but the curtains were closely drawn, making it impossible for any one outside to see in.

There were three people in the room when Dick and Mildred entered.

Two of them were a man and woman of middle age.

The other was a bright, alert-looking youth of about Dick's age.

The man and woman were Mr. and Mrs. James Marshall; the youth was their son, Harry.

Mildred introduced Dick to her relatives.

"We are glad to make the acquaintance of Dick Slater, the famous spy, and captain of the 'Liberty boys,'" said Mr. Marshall, shaking Dick's hand heartily.

"Indeed, yes," said his wife, also shaking hands with Dick. "Mildred has told us how you so nobly and bravely interferred when some Hessian officers were annoying her in Trenton, last winter. We are glad to know you."

"You are right we are," said Harry, seizing Dick's hand and shaking it energetically. "I have long wished to make your acquaintance, Dick. Jove! I'm glad cousin Mildred discovered that you were outside, there, a while ago, and succeeded in getting you away from those redcoats—and I guess you're glad, too, eh, Mildred?" with a laugh and a sly wink.

It was plain that Harry was a jolly youth.

Mildred blushed.

She was brave, though.

"Of course I'm glad," she said. "It would be strange if I were not. I owed Dick—Mr. Slater a debt, and I was glad of the chance to pay it."

"She owed me nothing," smiled Dick. "It was a pleasure to be the means of rendering her a service, and I owed her a debt instead of her owing me one."

Harry laughed.

"And now you're doubly in her debt, eh, Dick?" he said.

"That is the way I look at it, certainly."

"Good! Then, on the strength of that, I am going to ask a favor, Dick."

"It is granted before you ask it."

Harry laughed.

There was an eager light in his eyes, however.

"The favor I would ask is this: That you let me join your company of 'Liberty Boys'!"

Dick looked at the youth's parents.

"I should be glad to have you, provided your parents are willing," he said.

"Oh, they are willing!" cried Harry. "Aren't you?"

Mr. Marshall looked at his wife.

"It is as your mother says, Harry," he said. "If she is willing, I am willing; otherwise not."

A troubled look was on Mrs. Marshall's face.

She looked at the bright, eager face of her son anxiously, lovingly.

Harry went to his mother and threw his arm around her neck.

"Say you are willing, mother dear," he said, pleadingly; "you know how I have longed for a chance to strike a few blows for liberty. Now that the chance has come, let me take advantage of it."

A struggle was evidently going on in the mother's heart.

She was struggling between her love for her son and the desire to let him go out and fight for freedom.

"I will just say, Harry," said Dick, "that you will find the life of a patriot soldier anything but an easy or pleasant life. You will have to endure hardships, cold, exposure, will be exposed to dangers of all kinds. You will do well to think of those things before joining us, Harry."

"Oh, I don't expect to find it all smooth and pleasant, Dick. I am quite willing to take things as they come. I can stand the hardships as well as any one, I am sure."

Then he turned to his mother and looked at her pleadingly.

"You'll let me go, won't you, mother?" he asked.

The struggle was still going on in the mother's heart. Presently she made a decision, however.

She drew her son to her and kissed him.

"Yes, Harry, you may go," she said, in a low, faint voice; "you may go."

Her voice faltered at the last and the tears came into her eyes.

"There! don't cry, mother dear," said Harry, kissing her; "thank you for giving your permission for me to go. Just think how proud you will be when I return to you, wearing the uniform of a captain, colonel or something of that kind."

Dick could not help smiling.

"The patriot soldiers are not very well equipped with uniforms, Harry," he said. "It is hard work to get clothing of any kind."

"I don't care," the youth replied; "I would rather wear rags and be in the patriot ranks than to have the finest uniform and the highest official rank in the British army."

"That is the way to talk," said Dick. "That is the kind of spirit I like to see shown."

There was a pleased look on the face of Mr. Marshall.

It was evident that he was a true patriot, and that he was delighted to hear such sentiments from the lips of his son.

The mother, too, looked at the youth with an expression of pride in her eyes.

"Oh, cousin Harry will make a splendid soldier, I am sure!" said Mildred, enthusiastically.

"Thanks, cousin mine," said Harry, bowing low; "but don't talk in that strain too much, or you will make me

conceited—in which event Dick would refuse to have anything to do with me."

Dick smiled.

"I guess there isn't much danger of that," he said.

"I think not," said his mother.

Dick was well pleased to have Harry join his company.

The youth was bright, energetic and full of vim.

He would undoubtedly be a good fighter.

Then, too, he would be of use to Dick here in Philadelphia, and at once.

Harry's home was here.

He was undoubtedly well acquainted with the city.

He would know a great deal regarding the location of the British that would be of value.

He could help Dick wonderfully.

Dick congratulated himself on his good luck in getting acquainted with this family of patriots.

It was something to know where he could find friends in the enemy's camp, as it were.

Dick now entered into conversation with his new-found friends.

They were talking, when suddenly there came a loud knocking at the front door.

All leaped to their feet.

They looked at each other, inquiringly.

"Who can it be?" asked Mr. Marshall.

"Some of the redcoats, doubtless," replied Dick; "they have probably returned to make another search of your house!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE NEW RECRUIT.

"Then you must return to the hiding place!" said Mildred, in a frightened voice.

"Yes, go at once!" said Mr. Marshall.

"I'll go with you," said Harry.

He led the way out of the room, Dick following.

He took a lighted candle along.

He and Dick were soon down in the cellar.

Harry had no difficulty in finding the secret spring, and opening the secret door he passed through the opening.

Dick followed, and then Harry closed the door.

"If I hear them coming down the cellar stairs I'll blow the light out," the youth said.

"I hardly think they'll come down here this time, Harry. They were down here when they were here before, you know."

"That's so; perhaps they won't come down."

The youths became silent.

They listened intently.

They heard the sound of footsteps upstairs.

They heard the sound of voices.

Then presently all was silence.

"They have probably gone upstairs to look for you," whispered Harry.

"Likely," the youth replied.

They waited perhaps half an hour.

Then they heard footsteps and voices once more.

"They have come back downstairs," whispered Harry.

"Yes, I think they will go now," replied Dick.

But he was mistaken.

They heard the door opening upon the cellar stairway open.

"Jove, they're coming down here, after all!" whispered Harry, in a tone of alarm.

"Well, they didn't find us before, so I don't think they will do so this time," said Dick, calmly; "blow the light out."

Harry did so.

The redcoats were soon down in the cellar.

The youths could hear everything that was said.

The redcoats were talking of Dick, and the remarkable manner in which he had escaped.

They searched the cellar thoroughly, but did not seem to suspect the existence of a secret compartment.

At last they gave it up and went back upstairs.

"I guess that will put an end to the searching business," said Harry.

"I think so," agreed Dick.

The youths waited perhaps half an hour.

Then they went upstairs.

"Well, they didn't find you, after all," smiled Mr. Marshall, as the youths entered the parlor.

"No," replied Dick; "that secret room is a pretty handy thing."

"The redcoats searched high and low," smiled Mildred.

"From attic to cellar, eh, Mildred?" laughed Harry.

"Yes."

After a little further conversation Dick said he must be going.

"You are not going to leave the city to-night?" asked Mr. Marshall.

"No," replied Dick; "I have some work to do first."

"Can I help you?" asked Harry, eagerly.

"I think you can," said Dick. "If you know the city thoroughly you can be of assistance to me."

"Well, I certainly know Philadelphia like a book, Dick."

"And do you know the location of the various departments of the British—such as the headquarters of General Howe, the quartermaster's headquarters, and all that?"

"I do."

"Very well, then; you can be of considerable benefit to me. Come, and we will be going."

"How long do you expect to be in the city, Dick?" asked Mr. Marshall.

"I hardly know; it depends on circumstances. Two or three days, perhaps."

"Then I am going to ask you to make our house your home while here."

Dick shook his head.

"I fear I might get into trouble," he said. "The house will be watched, doubtless, and I would be seen coming and going, and that would be bad for you."

"I hardly think so; I made the redcoats believe that we had nothing to do with your entering this house. They do not know that I am a patriot."

"And we can slip in and out the back way," said Harry.

Dick hesitated.

He looked at Mrs. Marshall.

"I shall be pleased to have you accept my husband's invitation," she said.

"Very well, then, I will accept your invitation, with thanks," said Dick.

"Good!" cried Harry. "Just see how delighted Mildred is."

The beautiful girl blushed.

"Stop teasing, Harry," she said.

Harry laughed.

"Come, Dick," he said; "the redcoats have been hunting you, now let's go out and hunt them."

"Very well," and then bidding the three good night, the two youths left the room.

They made their way to the back door, and Harry unlocked and opened it.

He looked out.

It was quite dark out.

All was still.

"I guess the coast is clear," he whispered.

Then he stepped out of doors.

Dick followed.

Harry pulled the door shut, and, locking it, placed the key in his pocket.

He led the way across the back yard.

They were soon at the fence.

Beyond the fence was an alley.

The youths climbed the fence.

As they stepped down off the fence into the alley they heard the sound of rushing footsteps.

Then several dark forms loomed up close at hand.

"Look out!" cried Dick, in a low, intense tone of voice; "we are attacked, Harry!"

The next instant the youths were engaged in a hand-to-hand combat.

It was so dark they could not tell what sort of looking fellows the men were who had attacked them.

They shrewdly guessed the fellows were redcoats, however.

The youths fought fiercely.

Dick was a host within himself in this kind of an encounter.

It was Harry's first experience.

He was a brave youth, however.

Moreover, he was an athletic, strong youth, and was a fighter.

He considered himself a soldier now.

He made up his mind to conduct himself as became a soldier.

He would show Dick that he was one who could be depended on to hold his own, at least.

The youths were outnumbered more than two to one.

As nearly as Dick could make out there were five or six of their assailants.

But outnumbered though they were, Dick and Harry held their own admirably.

One thing, their assailants made no attempt to use weapons.

This showed that it was their wish to capture the youths. It probably saved the youths' lives.

Had their assailants used weapons, they would have succeeded in overcoming the youths without doubt.

As it was, they found they had taken a big contract.

Dick knocked two or three of the fellows down.

Harry, too, did well.

He succeeded in knocking two of the fellows down.

Then one seized him in such a manner that the youth was helpless, and the next thing he knew he was on his back on the ground, with his assailant on top of him.

Harry uttered an exclamation.

He did not cry out to Dick for help.

But Dick understood what the exclamation meant.

He redoubled his own exertions.

He knocked the fellows down, one after another, and then leaped forward.

He seized the fellow who had downed Harry and jerked him off the youth.

"Come," he cried, "let's get away from here!"

They leaped away up the alley.

The men with whom they had been having their combat leaped to their feet and gave chase.

The youths were fleet of foot, however.

They did not have much fear that the redcoats—if such the fellows were—would be able to overtake them.

Reaching the street, the youths turned to the left and ran with all their might.

Their pursuers emerged upon the street soon afterward.

They began yelling to attract the attention of people on the street.

"Stop them, somebody!" they cried. "Stop those two fellows! They are rebels and spies! Stop them!"

But the youths were not to be stopped so easily.

They raced onward like deer.

They drew away from their pursuers.

Just as they were coming to the next street, however, a party of redcoats came around the corner.

The newcomers heard the shouts of the youths' pursuers.

They saw the youths running.

They understood the situation instantly.

"We will have to cut across the street and try to get past them, Harry," said Dick, and he leaped forward in the direction indicated.

The advancing redcoats saw the move.

They gave utterance to shouts and started to head the fugitives off.

The youths were desperate now, however.

They were determined that they would not allow themselves to be captured.

They ran faster than ever.

They saw it was going to be a very close thing if they escaped.

They were not at all sure they could do so.

They sped onward at their best speed, however.

The redcoats did not have so far to run as the youths.

Neither were they so fleet of foot.

The youths managed to reach the corner a few feet ahead of the redcoats.

Several of the redcoats made attempts to grasp the youths.

The youths dodged, however, and evaded the grasp of their enemies.

This angered the redcoats.

They began shouting to the youths to stop.

"Stop! Stop, or we will fire!" was the cry.

But Dick and Harry did not stop.

They did not slacken their speed in the least.

They darted around the corner and flew up the street.

Around the corner, in swift pursuit, came the redcoats.

"Do you think they will fire, Dick?" gasped Harry.

"As likely as not, Harry," was the reply.

"Stop!" came the cry once more. "Stop, or we will fire!"

But the youths paid no attention to the command.

Onward they sped.

They were determined to escape or die trying.

Crash! roar!

The pursuing redcoats had fired a volley.

The bullets whistled all around the youths.

A cry escaped Harry.

"Are you hurt?" asked Dick, in an anxious tone.

"Something hit my arm," replied Harry; "it felt hot!"

"It was a bullet. Can you use your arm?"

"Yes."

"Then it is a mere flesh wound. It isn't dangerous."

"I'm glad to know that."

It was Harry's first experience in being under fire.

He was doing first rate, Dick thought.

He was sure that Harry was going to be a brave soldier. He would be a valuable addition to the ranks of the "Liberty Boys."

They raced onward.

They turned down the first street they came to.

It happened to be a street leading toward the wharfs along the Delaware River.

There were lumber yards, coal yards, etc., along the river front, and the youths felt sure that if they could reach these they would be able to dodge their pursuers.

They ran as swiftly as they had been running all the time.

Both youths had splendid staying qualities.

They were better equipped in this respect than were their pursuers.

The redcoats were not used to sprinting.

They were becoming very tired.

They kept up the chase, but they were falling more and more behind.

Presently the youths reached a coal yard.

They raced through it and came out on the wharf almost before they knew it.

A vessel lay alongside the wharf.

Lanterns hanging from yardarms made things visible on the wharf.

As the youths came in sight, half a dozen men rushed down the gangplank.

They seized Dick and Harry.

The youths were taken wholly by surprise.

They had not been expecting anything of this kind.

Before they knew it, almost, they were lifted bodily and borne up the gangway and aboard the vessel.

## CHAPTER VII.

"FIRE!"

The youths kicked and struggled.

It was no use.

They could not free themselves.

The men had seized them so quickly and unexpectedly that the youths were taken at a disadvantage.

Scarcely had the youths been borne aboard the ship before there was the sound of rattling chains.

Then the youths felt the vessel moving.

They had not time to see anything, however, as they were carried down the companionway.

They were in the forecastle in a few moments.

Here the men placed the youths on their feet.

They still retained hold of Dick and Harry, however.

"What does this mean?" asked Dick, sternly. "Why have you seized us in this manner?"

"Oh, that's all right, my hearty!" was the reply.

The men, as Dick could see, there being a lantern in the forecastle, were sailors.

They wore the suits of British tars.

"No, it isn't all right, not by any means!" said Dick.

"You have no right to seize us in this manner."

"Et wuz my orders, me boy."

"Orders?"

"Yes."

"Orders from whom?"

"From the cap'n."

"The captain of this vessel?"

"Yes."

"Why should the captain wish you to make prisoners of us?"

The sailor who had done the talking shook his head.

"I dunno."

"He doesn't know us," said Dick.

"No, I s'pose not."

"He could not have known we were coming."

"I dunno 'bout that."

"How came you to rush out upon us so quickly?"

"We wuz ordered to do et."

"Let go of us!" ordered Dick.

"We can't do that, me hearty."

"Let go, or it will be the worse for you!"

"I guess not."

Dick was on the point of making an attempt to free himself when a sailor appeared at the doorway and said:

"The cap'n says bring the pris'ners up to the cabin."

Dick decided to wait a while.

They were to be taken before the captain.

This was what he wished.

So there was no need of making a disturbance.

He would wait and see what the captain had to say regarding the affair.

They were soon in the main cabin.

The man before whom they were brought was evidently a Briton.

He wore the uniform of a British officer in the navy.

He eyed Dick and Harry searchingly.

The youths returned his look unflinchingly.

"A couple of young fellows," the man murmured, as if speaking to himself.

"Why are we here?" asked Dick.

He was a youth who was never daunted.

He spoke boldly; and there was a peculiar tone of command in his voice that appeared to surprise the officer.

He looked at Dick keenly.

"Why are you here?" he repeated.

"Yes; by what right did your men seize us and bring us aboard this vessel?"

The officer made a gesture.

"My dear friend, do not get excited," he said, calmly; "these are war times, you know, and one does not have to give reasons for actions in war times."

"Of course, we cannot force you to give your reasons for this outrage," said Dick; "but we would like to know the reasons, anyway."

"Well, I will tell you, then. We are short-handed, and, needing a couple of more men to help with the work, we have secured you two young men."

"Oh, that is it, eh?"

"It is."

Dick realized that he and Harry were in for it.

He had heard of instances where Americans had been seized, taken aboard British vessels and pressed into service.

And this was to be the fate of himself and companion.

"This is a British vessel?" he asked.

The captain nodded.

"It is," he replied.

"But I didn't know there were any British vessels at Philadelphia. I thought——"

"You thought that they could not get past the forts?" with a smile.

Dick nodded.

"That is what I thought," he admitted.

"Well, you were mistaken. We got past the forts and came up to Philadelphia, and now we expect to get past them, and go down the river and out to sea."

"I don't see how you managed it," said Dick.

The captain smiled.

"We are too smart for the rebels, that is all," he said.

Dick did not like the bigoted air with which the man made this statement.

"You undoubtedly think you are smart," thought Dick; "but, if I can help it, you shall not get past the forts to-night!"

Aloud he said:

"We will be of no use to you."

"Why not?" the officer queried.

"We are not sailors."

"Oh, that is it?"

"Yes. We know nothing about the work of a sailor."

The officer smiled.

"You are not too old to learn," he said, significantly.

"Then we are to be kept aboard this vessel?" asked Dick.

The officer nodded.

"You are."

A peculiar, grim look appeared on Dick's face.

"You had better reconsider the matter," he said, quietly.

The officer shook his head.

"I couldn't think of doing so," he said.

"You will be sorry for it if you don't!"

There was a threatening tone to Dick's voice.

The officer frowned.

"You are insolent!" he said. "I will listen to no more from you. Take them away!"

This last command was to the sailors who had escorted the youths into the cabin.

"Remember what I have said!" said Dick, as they were leaving the cabin.

The officer made no reply.

"You two fellows will find yourselves in trouble when we git out to sea," said one of the sailors, when they were out on the deck of the vessel.

"You think so?" asked Dick.

"I know et."

"Why will we find ourselves in trouble?"

"Because you talked sassy to the old man."

"You mean the captain?"

"Yes."

"That is all right," said Dick; "but you will find that I told the truth when I told him he would be sorry for it, if he kept us aboard this ship."

"You can't do nuthin'."

"Perhaps not."

"Uv course you can't. You will do well not to try enny thing. You'll git into trouble worse'n enny you wuz ever in, ef you do."

"Perhaps so."

"I know et."

"Let it go," said Dick; "what are you going to do with us?"

"Oh, we are goin' to turn you loose now."

"Turn us loose?"

"Yes; you can't do no damage now."

"Oh, of course not."

Dick said this, but he was at the same instant trying to think of some damage that he could do.

He had made up his mind that the ship should not get past the forts and out to sea, if he could help it.

The vessel was, as nearly as he could make out, an ordinary schooner.

It was a vessel such as was at that time called a "sloop-of-war."

The men who had conducted the youths to the cabin now left them to themselves.

"What do you think of this, anyway, Dick?" asked Harry.

"I think we are in a pretty bad predicament, Harry."

"That is the way it looks to me."

"If we do not succeed in getting away before the vessel gets out of the Delaware River we will be in for a voyage in spite of ourselves."

"Yes, but how are we to escape?"

"That is the question."

"It is a question that cannot be answered, Dick; at least, that is the way it looks to me."

"I don't know, Harry. One thing is sure, I am not going to take a trip out to sea on this vessel, if I can help it."

"But I fear we can't help it."

"We must help it! I have work to do in Philadelphia and I am not going to permit myself to be carried away from there."

"But what can you do to prevent it?"

"I don't know—yet. I must think of something."

"I wish you could," said Harry, earnestly. "Jove! won't the folks be frightened when we fail to return to the house."

"We must not fail, though, Harry."

"I wish that we might not have to fail."

At this instant Dick took note of the fact that all the lights on the vessel had been extinguished.

It was very dark.

He understood what was now to be done.

The vessel was going to run past the forts in the darkness.

Once it was past it would be safe.

Dick thought this would be very dangerous.

He did not see how it would be possible to get past in such complete darkness.

He thought that there would be great danger of running aground or into something and wrecking the vessel.

Still, a skillful pilot might be able to take the vessel through in safety.

Dick wondered if there was anything he could do to prevent the vessel from getting past the forts.

He set up some hard thinking.

The sailors moved about the deck and spoke in low tones.

They paid no attention to Dick and Harry.

The youths seemed free to do as they pleased.

Of course, it was considered that they were powerless to do anything or to escape.

It was winter, and the water was icy cold.

It would be as much as one's life was worth to leap overboard.

One would be seized with cramps before the shore could be reached.

The sailors knew this.

They knew that the youths knew it, also, and thought there was no danger that they would attempt it.

Dick, however, was ready to take any chances rather than allow himself to be carried out to sea.

He did not wish to leave the vessel, however, until he had done something to strike the British a blow.

He wished to prevent the vessel from getting past the forts, if such a thing was possible.

But how was he to do it?

Dick thought fast and hard.

At last a thought came to him.

It was a desperate scheme that flashed into his mind.

But, no matter.

He would try it, anyway.

It would, if successful at all, effectually prevent the vessel from getting out past the forts, and Dick would give much, would risk a great deal to accomplish this.

He wished to get even with the captain of the vessel for having had them dragged aboard the ship against their will.

He had told the captain he would be sorry for keeping them aboard, and he wished to make his statement good.

Dick plucked Harry by the sleeve.

"Come with me," he whispered.

The two stole away, along the deck.

Dick led the way down the steps leading to the forecastle.

At the foot of the stairs was a landing.

A door opened into the forecastle.

Another door opened upon a flight of steps which led down into the hold.

Dick opened this door.

He passed through the opening.

Harry followed.

Dick closed the door and then led the way down the steps.

It was very dark.

They had to feel their way.

They were soon at the bottom of the steps, however.

"What are you going to do, Dick?" asked Harry.

"You will soon see, Harry," was the reply.

Dick reached in his pocket and drew forth a flint, steel and tinder-box.

Opening the box he drew forth some tinder.

Then he began striking the flint and steel together.

The sparks were plainly visible in the darkness of the hold.

"What are you going to do?" asked Harry, in an awed voice.

"I am going to set this vessel on fire!" was the calm reply.

"What!"

Harry could hardly believe his ears.

"That is what I am going to do, Harry."

Dick's voice was cool and calm.

"But—great guns, Dick, you'll cause our death! We will lose our lives, sure!"

"Not absolutely sure, Harry. We may be able to get ashore."

"The chances are mighty slim, Dick."

"That may be. It doesn't matter, though; I would rather take the chances than to allow myself to be carried away on a long voyage when there is important business for me to attend to in Philadelphia."

Harry was almost paralyzed.

The coolness of his companion was almost more than he could understand.

He said no more, however.

He was a brave youth.

He had cast in his fortunes with Dick's, and was ready to take his chances along with that youth.

If Dick was willing to risk death, he was willing to do the same.

Suddenly a spark ignited the tinder.

It blazed up.

Dick looked around him with keen, searching gaze.

He saw a pile of oakum.

It was near by.

Dick lifted the tinder and tossed it on the pile of oakum.

The oakum caught on fire immediately.

It blazed up.

The hold was lighted up so that it was possible to see all around.

"Help me, Harry," said Dick.

He began searching around.

He found pieces of old sails, some empty boxes, and other things which would burn.

These he brought and piled on the fire.

Harry helped in the work.

They kept this up till they were confident there would be no doubt that the fire would keep on burning, and extend till it took in the entire hold.

Then Dick led the way back up the steps and through the doorway, Harry keeping close at his heels.

Dick closed the door carefully.

He did not wish the fire to be discovered until it had got such a start that it would be impossible to extinguish it.

If he could succeed in being the means of the ship being destroyed, he would be fairly well satisfied.

Of course, he hoped that Harry and himself should be successful in escaping with their lives.

The youths went out on the deck of the vessel.

They took up their position by the rail.

They waited patiently.

Perhaps half an hour elapsed.

"We must be getting down close to the forts," whispered Dick.

"I should judge so," replied Harry.

"I wish the fire would hurry and get in its work, Harry. I wanted that it should break out before we reached the forts."

At this instant a commotion was heard forward, toward the forecastle.

"Fire! Fire!" was the cry which then went up.

Then the bright glare of the fire was seen shining up out of the companionway of the forecastle.

"Good!" exclaimed Dick, in a low tone. "Now we will see whether or not this vessel gets past the forts and out to sea!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### "HURRAH FOR DICK SLATER."

All was excitement and confusion on the vessel in an instant.

The sailors went rushing forward to aid in trying to extinguish the flames.

The captain and the other officers came rushing out of the cabin.

Rapid orders were given.

The sailors tried to obey the orders, but it was soon seen that it would be useless to try to extinguish the fire.

It had gained too great headway.

Soon the flames came up the companionway to such an extent as to light up the entire deck.

Then the captain happened to think that they were in double danger.

They were in danger of being drowned, and if they escaped that they were in danger of being captured by the patriot garrison in the forts.

The vessel was now almost down to where the forts were.

Doubtless the patriots had already sighted the burning vessel.

This was soon made a certainty.

The boom of a cannon was heard.

"There goes the alarm-gun," said the captain to his first officer; "we must escape from the vessel at once!"

"Yes, if we wish to avoid being captured."

"We must avoid it. We must not allow ourselves to be captured!"

Then the captain gave the order:

"All hands to lower the boats!"

The sailors stopped trying to extinguish the fire.

They rushed to lower the boats.

This suited them better than fighting the fire.

The boats were quickly dropped into the water.

Then all hands began dropping into the boats.

Dick and Harry moved forward.

It seemed as if they had been forgotten in the excitement of the occasion.

This suited them exactly.

They did not think, however, that the officers and sailors would object to their entering the boats.

Dick, who was keeping his eyes open, saw that the vessel was now almost even with the forts.

He saw that the patriots from the forts were entering boats.

He knew what that meant.

They were coming out to intercept the boats from the burning vessel.

Dick hoped they would succeed.

He entered one of the boats.

Harry followed.

There was considerable excitement shown by officers and men.

They realized that they were in danger of being captured by the hated "rebels."

It was bad enough to lose the ship.

It would be a great deal worse if they should be captured.

As soon as all were in the boats, the order was given to pull away from the doomed vessel.

This was done.

The boats were headed down the river.

"Pull!" yelled the captain. "Pull, men! Don't let those rebels catch us!"

The men pulled with all their might.

As they were going with the current, the boats made good headway.

The boats from the forts were making good headway, also, however.

They were headed diagonally across the river and downstream.

The abandoned vessel was now a mass of flames.

It threw up a glare which lighted the country for a mile around.

The river was revealed to view for a mile up and down.

The captain and officers kept urging the sailors to exert themselves to the utmost.

The sailors obeyed.

They rowed as hard as they could.

The patriots had got started first, however.

They had seemingly sized up the situation, and had foreseen that the boats from the burning vessel would be headed down the stream.

So they had headed diagonally downward and across, from the start, and were now far enough down so that it became almost a certainty that they would be enabled to head the other boats off.

When the captain and his officers became aware of the fact that the chances were that they would be captured, they gave vent to exclamations of rage and disappointment.

They kept urging the sailors to "Row!" however.

They would not give up until they were forced to do so.

Closer and closer drew the boats from the forts.

They approached from both sides and were hemming the ship's boats in.

At last they were close at hand.

"Stop!" cried a commanding voice from one of the leading boats; "stop rowing at once or we will open fire!"

The men in the boats from the forts—or those who were not rowing, at least—were armed with muskets, and these were leveled.

The British officers and men saw it would do no good to try to offer resistance.

It would only result in the death of the majority of them. The captain reluctantly gave the order for the sailors to stop rowing.

"Now row toward the fort!" ordered the officer in command of the boats from the forts.

The captain of the burning vessel gave the order, and the sailors again bent to their oars.

All the boats now headed across the river toward Fort Mifflin.

Not a word was spoken by any one.

The shore was soon reached.

The boats made a landing.

As the officers and sailors from the ill-fated ship stepped ashore, they were made prisoners.

The men were about to make prisoners of Dick and Harry when one of the patriot officers happened to approach.

It was Major Thayer who was in command of Fort Mifflin.

The major had met Dick on two or three occasions in the past, and the instant his eyes fell on the youth he recognized him.

"Dick Slater!" he exclaimed, in amazement. "Why, what in the name of all that is wonderful were you doing aboard that British vessel?"

The British captain happened to be near.

He started and looked at Dick in surprise.

He had doubtless heard of Dick, and the fact that the youth was Dick Slater was no doubt a surprise to him.

"My friend, here, and myself were captured and taken aboard the vessel by force," explained Dick.

"Oh, that was it! Well, it was lucky for you that the vessel caught on fire, then. You would have been carried out to sea, otherwise."

"Yes, you are right about that."

"He set the ship on fire!" cried Harry, who saw Dick was not going to tell this, and who wished his companion to have all the credit that was his due.

"What is that! You don't mean to say that you set the vessel on fire, Dick!" exclaimed Major Thayer, in wondering amazement.

"Yes," smiled Dick. "I knew it was the only way to keep from being carried out to sea; and then, I owed the captain of the vessel a little debt which I thought I could best pay by spoiling his plans."

Dick looked at the captain and smiled as he said this.

The man was almost black in the face so great was his rage and mortification.

"I don't believe it!" he cried. "You would not have

dared do such a thing. You would have feared you would lose your life by doing so."

Major Thayer laughed.

"You do not know Dick Slater, if you think that would have deterred him," he said.

"I told you you would be sorry for it if you kept me on board the vessel against my will," said Dick to the captain.

"And you really and truly set the vessel on fire?"

"Really and truly."

"How did you manage to do it?"

"My companion, here, and I went down into the hold and kindled the fire."

"Ah!"

The British officer glared at Dick as if he would have been glad of a chance to murder him.

No doubt he felt angry enough to do this.

He was helpless, however, and all he could do was to glare at Dick in a fierce manner.

When the word went around that Dick had set the vessel on fire, a cheer went up for him.

He was known by reputation to all the patriot soldiers.

"Hurrah for Dick Slater! Hip! hip! hurrah!" they roared.

## CHAPTER IX.

### DICK ACTS A PART.

The patriots were delighted with the way things had turned out.

A British war-sloop had been destroyed.

Her officers and crew had been captured.

It was something to be pleased with.

The British, of course, were not so well pleased.

But this was not to be expected.

The prisoners were taken into the fort and confined in a strong room.

Then Dick had a talk with Major Thayer.

He told the major it was important that he get back to Philadelphia at once.

The major promptly volunteered to have Dick and Harry taken back to the city in a boat.

This was what Dick wished.

He thanked the major heartily.

"No thanks are necessary, Dick," the major declared; "just see what we succeeded in doing to-night, all because of your bravery and daring. There is nothing we should not be willing to do in return."

"Oh, I was glad to do that," said Dick. "It always gives me great pleasure to be the means of disconcerting the British and causing them to be captured."

"And it will give me great pleasure to do you the little favor of sending you safely back to the city, Dick."

Ten minutes later Dick and Harry entered a boat and started back up the river.

The British vessel had burned down to the water's edge, and the fire had been extinguished, so their movements could not be seen.

There were a couple of men in the boat to do the rowing. All Dick and Harry had to do was to sit there and take it easy.

This they did.

It was slow work rowing back up against the current, but the outskirts of the city were reached presently.

The men kept on rowing, and made their way well up before heading in toward the shore.

They landed at a point where there were no lights.

The youths stepped ashore, bade the two patriots good-bye, and stole away.

They made their way up from the wharf and were presently headed down a wide, long street.

"Do you know where we are, Harry?" asked Dick.

"Yes, Dick," was the reply; "I have been here before."

"How far are we from the British quartermaster's quarters?"

"Oh, a mile and a half I should say."

"That isn't far."

"Not so very far."

"We can walk it in half an hour."

"Yes, easily."

The two kept on at a rapid walk.

They met a few people.

Not a great many, however.

It was getting late.

The majority of the citizens had gone to bed.

The youths were rather glad than otherwise, as they did not care about meeting many people.

They certainly had no desire to meet redcoats.

Half an hour later the two reached a building which Harry said was occupied by the quartermaster.

It was a large, rambling structure.

The youths walked around to the front of the building.

There was a gate and a courtway leading into a square court.

The farmers could drive in here and unload their produce, then turn around and drive out again.

"Wagons come here at all times of the day and night," Harry explained.

"I understand," said Dick; "many of them come from a distance, and this place is kept open all the time so that they can enter whenever they get here."

"Yes, that is it."

Dick wished to make a close investigation of the place. He had a reason for doing so.

In company with Harry he stood on the opposite side of the street and looked at the building closely.

This was not satisfactory, however.

He wished to examine the interior of the court and building at close range.

But how was he to accomplish this?

He was puzzled to know.

He decided, at last, that the boldest plan would be the best one.

He would walk boldly into the courtyard and pretend that he wished to make some inquiries regarding the prices of produce.

There was danger in pursuing such a course.

But that would not deter him.

He would take the chances.

If he were to put into execution the plan which he had formed, he must learn something regarding the quartermaster's way of doing business.

Dick turned to his companion.

"You stay here, Harry," he said; "I am going over there and inside the place."

"Jove! you are liable to get into trouble, Dick."

"Oh, there is some danger, of course. I shall be careful, however."

"Better let me go with you, Dick."

"No, I can do better alone, I think. You stay here. I will be back before long, safe and sound."

Then Dick walked across the street and boldly entered the courtway.

Dick was dressed in an exceedingly rough manner.

His clothing was that of an ordinary farmer's boy.

A poor farmer at that.

The youth's clothing was ragged.

He did not look like a soldier—at any rate, not in so far as his dress was concerned.

Dick thought he would be safe in entering the place.

As he entered the courtway a door at the left-hand side opened.

The door opened into the quartermaster's office.

A man appeared in the open doorway.

"Well, who are you?" the man asked.

"Me?" said Dick, in a simple manner.

"Yes, you."

"I'm Sam Harris."

"Sam Harris, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what do you want?"

"Why, I'll tell ye," said Dick; "ye see, my father, he told me ter come heer an' ax ye whut ye paid fur meat, an' corn, an' pertaters, an' ever'thing like that."

The man looked at Dick a few moments, and then said:

"Your father is a farmer?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he has produce to sell?"

"Yes, sir; ef he kin get er good price fur et."

"Well, I'll tell you what you do, Sam," the man said; "you tell your father to bring on his produce and we will guarantee to buy it and pay him twice as much as the rebels will pay, and we'll pay in gold—do you understand? We don't ask any one to take worthless paper."

"An' ye'll reely pay in gold?"

"We really will."

Dick hesitated.

"Air ye shore ye hev got ther gold ter pay with?" he asked, in a doubting tone.

The man laughed.

He was evidently a good-natured fellow.

He seemed to enjoy Dick's unbelief.

Another man might have become angry, but he took it good-humoredly.

He beckoned to Dick.

"Come in here," he said.

"Whut fur?" asked Dick, pretending to hang back, and be reluctant.

"I wish to show you something."

"Whut?"

"Come in and see."

Dick still pretended to hesitate.

He did not wish the man to know that the thing of all things that he desired was to enter the room.

"Come in," the man insisted; "nothing will hurt you."

"Air ye shore?"

The man laughed.

"Quite sure."

Dick pretended to overcome his reluctance now.

He stepped forward and followed the man into the office.

He paused and stood looking about the room with an air of assumed suspicion, when he was inside.

The man closed the door and walked across to the other side of the room.

There was a sort of combined desk and counter there.

The man stepped around behind this counter.

"You seemed to doubt my having sufficient gold to pay for your produce when you bring it," he said; "so I thought

I would show you that your fears are groundless. See here!"

The man drew out a drawer.

"Take a look in there," the man invited.

Dick stepped forward.

The drawer was filled almost to the brim with gold!

Dick made a great show of surprise.

His under jaw dropped.

He stared, openmouthed.

The man seemed to enjoy the youth's amazement.

He smiled.

"Well, what do you think now?" he asked. "Do you think we will be able to pay your father for his produce?"

"I—I t-think s-so!" stammered Dick, in well-simulated awestricken tones.

The man laughed aloud.

"You may be sure of it," he said; "tell your father to bring along his produce. We will pay him well for it, and pay in gold."

"All right; I'll tell 'im."

Then Dick hesitated.

He looked all around the room.

The man noticed Dick's action.

"What is it?" he asked.

Dick looked at the drawer filled with gold, and then all around the room again before replying.

Then he said;

"Ye hain't heer all by yerself, air ye?"

The man nodded.

"Yes, all alone," he replied.

Dick shook his head.

He put on a serious look.

"I sh'd think ye'd be afeerd ye'd be robbed," he said.

The man smiled.

"Oh, there's no danger. There are others in the building, but they are asleep. I could bring them to my assistance in case I needed help, however."

Dick nodded.

"Thet's better," he said. "Et would be bad ef ye wuz ter be robbed."

"You think there wouldn't be any gold for your father in case that should happen, eh?"

Dick grinned.

"Thet's right."

The man laughed as he pushed the drawer shut.

"There would be no danger of that," he said; "there is plenty more gold where this came from, and if it was to be stolen we would have more to take its place."

"I'm glad to hear that," said Dick.

The man smiled.

He came out from behind the counter.

He walked to the door and opened it.

Dick took this as a hint that he might go.

So he moved toward the door.

"I'm much obliged ter ye fur showin' me ther gold," he said; "I never seed so much gold in all my life. I didn't think theer wuz so mutch in ther whole worl'!"

The man laughed.

"You will find plenty here, when your father brings the produce," he said; "good-night."

"Good-night," said Dick.

Then he passed out through the doorway.

The door closed behind him.

Dick walked quickly out through the entrance to the courtway.

He hastened across the street.

He found Harry standing where he had left him a few minutes before.

"Well, you got back safe and sound," said Harry, with a sigh of relief.

"Yes," replied Dick. "Well, Harry, lead the way to your home. I guess I have done enough for to-night."

"All right," was the prompt reply; "I'm ready to quit for to-night, if you are. I must say that I have no fault to find with my first night's work as a soldier, in so far as excitement is concerned!"

"There was a little bit of excitement mixed up with our experience on that vessel, Harry," said Dick, coolly.

"A little bit! Well, I should say so!"

The youths walked rapidly away.

Half an hour later they were in the vicinity of Harry's home.

They approached from the rear.

They approached carefully.

They thought it probable that there would be one or more of the redcoats on watch.

So they stole down the alley as noiselessly as two Indians.

If there were redcoats on watch, the youths were too smart for them, for they were not accosted.

They reached the back door of Harry's home, and the youth unlocked the door with the key, which he had brought away with him when they left the house.

When they were inside the house Harry drew a breath of relief.

"Well, I guess we are safe for to-night," he said.

The rest of the folks were up still.

They were in the parlor.

They listened to Harry's story of his and Dick's adventures with great and eager interest.

Mildred's eyes sparkled as she heard how Dick had set the vessel on fire.

All congratulated the youths on their good fortune in causing the destruction of the vessel and the capture of the British, and on their own good luck in escaping.

They complimented Dick on his bravery in setting the vessel on fire, but he modestly disclaimed the credit for having done anything wonderful.

"Harry is entitled to as much credit," he said; "he was in for it the same as I was."

Harry blushed, and looked pleased.

"But you thought of it, Dick," he said; "I should never have thought of such a thing."

The five talked for a while longer, and then separated for the night.

Harry took Dick to his room and the youths were soon in bed and asleep.

They were up bright and early next morning.

After breakfast, Dick and Harry went back upstairs, and Dick wrote a long letter.

When he had finished it, he folded it and addressed it to Bob Estabrook.

Then he turned to Harry.

"Harry," he said, "I suppose you can ride a horse?"

"Yes, indeed!" was the reply.

"Very good; do you think you can find your way to Valley Forge?"

Harry's eyes sparkled.

"That is where the patriot army is encamped," he said. "Yes, I can find my way there."

"Good! Do you think you can do so in the nighttime?"

"I am sure that I can."

"Good, again! Well, I wish you to leave the city to-night and ride to Valley Forge."

"I'll do it."

It was evident that Harry was eager to undertake the task.

"I wish you to take this letter. When you get there, I wish you to go to the quarters occupied by the 'Liberty Boys' and ask for Bob Estabrook. When you have found him you will give him the letter."

"I shall be glad to do this, Dick."

"I thought you would be."

"And when I have done that—what, Dick?"

"You are to remain under orders from Bob. Whatever tells you to do, you will do; do you understand?"

"I do. And is there to be no message to General Washington, Dick?"

"Bob will report to the commander-in-chief as soon as he has read the letter, Harry."

"Oh!"

There was a disappointed tone to Harry's voice.

It was evident that he had wished to be the bearer of a message to General Washington.

"You will accompany Bob, when he goes to report to the commander-in-chief, Harry," said Dick.

The youth's face brightened.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "I am eager to see General Washington."

The youths kept close within doors that day.

After supper, however, and as soon as it was dark, they left the house and made their way in the direction of the livery stable where Dick had left his horse.

Dick paid the livery stable man for keeping the horse, and then Harry mounted and rode away, after receiving a few final instructions from Dick.

Then Dick made his way back to Harry's home.

His work was done for the present.

All he could do was to await the action of Bob and the "Liberty Boys."

As he could not do anything on the streets, Dick decided that it would be only policy to stay within doors.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE DOUBLE VICTORY.

That night, and all next day Dick remained within doors. He did not leave the house until after dark.

Then he slipped out the back way and made his way out toward the northern outskirts of the city.

When near the edge of the city he took up his position where he could see every vehicle that came along the street.

He settled himself down for a long wait.

One, two, three hours passed.

Dick waited patiently.

It was perhaps half an hour later when the youth's quick ears detected the rumble of wheels.

"They are coming!" thought Dick.

Presently he could hear the rumble of the wheels quite plainly.

Then he saw something looming up in the darkness.

He could just make out the outlines, but was sure it was a team and wagon.

He walked out into the middle of the street.

He waited till the horses were close to him, then he uttered a peculiar whistle.

The whistle was answered immediately.

"It is them, sure enough!" thought Dick. "Good!"

The next instant the team was brought to a stop.

Dick strode to the wagon and climbed up.

"Is it you, Martin?" he asked.

"Yes, Dick," was the low reply from the man on the seat in front.

"Good!—and the boys?"

"They're in the wagon here."

"Good, again. Hello, Bob!"

"Hello, Dick!" came back from underneath a tarpaulin which was so arranged that it covered the entire wagon-box.

"Are you all there?" asked Dick.

"All here, Dick."

"Eight of you?"

"Eight of us!"

"And the rest of the company—are they waiting outside the city limits for us?"

"Yes; I fixed everything just as you told me to in the letter, Dick."

"Good!"

Then Dick seated himself beside the driver.

"Drive on," he said.

The man obeyed.

Twenty minutes later the wagon approached the building occupied by the quartermaster of the British army.

Dick told the driver to drive right in through the court-way.

The man obeyed.

The courtway was lighted by a couple of lanterns, one hanging at each side of the entrance.

"Remember, you are to pose as my father," whispered Dick to the driver.

The man, who was a gray-bearded, grizzly-haired old fellow, nodded.

"I understand," he said.

The next instant he brought the team to a standstill in front of the door leading to the quartermaster's office.

The man in the office had heard the rumble of the wheels, doubtless.

At any rate, he now opened the door and stepped out.

It was the same man Dick had seen two nights before.

"How air ye!" called out Dick. "Well, heer we air, with thet load uv produce, mister."

"Ah, yes; I remember you," said the man, with a smile. "And that is your father, eh? What have you in the way of produce?"

"A leetle uv everythin', mister; jes' git up on the side uv ther waggin an' see fur yerself."

"Wait till I get a lantern."

The man stepped back into the office.

"Now, fellows, be sure and do your work well!" said Dick, in a low, cautious tone. "As soon as he gets up on the side of the wagon, seize him!"

"All right, Dick," came back the reply, in a cautious tone.

The man reappeared from the office, now.

He had a lantern in his hand.

He approached the wagon.

He climbed up onto the step at the side of the wagon-box.

Dick lifted the tarpaulin.

As he did so the man leaned forward to look at the produce which he supposed to be there.

He found his throat seized by strong hands.

Almost before he realized that anything was wrong he had been jerked over the edge of the box, and down into it.

The youths had done their work well.

The captured man managed to give utterance to one smothered cry, but it was not loud, and Dick did not think any one could have heard it.

"Tie his arms, quick!" said Dick. "And gag him! Then come into the office."

The youths in the wagon-box obeyed Dick's instructions to the letter.

They had brought ropes along for this purpose.

They soon had the man bound hand and foot, and gagged.

Then they leaped out of the wagon and hastened into the office, whither Dick had already gone.

The drawer which contained the gold was locked, but Dick ran out and felt in the prisoner's pocket and found the key.

He hastened back and unlocked the drawer.

The youths removed the drawer entire.

It was filled with gold, just as it had been on the night Dick had seen it.

The youths carried the drawer out, and placed it in the wagon.

Just as they were leaving the office they heard the sounds of a commotion overhead.

"The redcoats are coming!" said Dick. "We must get away in a hurry now!"

The driver had turned the team around while the youths were in the office, so as soon as they had placed the drawer in the wagon and leaped in after it, it was not necessary to lose any more time.

"Hurry!" said Dick to the driver. "Get out of here as quickly as possible!"

The driver started the horses and drove out through the courtway.

As they left the court, several men came running out through the open doorway of the office.

They gave utterance to wild cries as they saw the wagon disappearing.

They seemed to understand the situation in an instant.

"Drive as rapidly as possible," ordered Dick; "those fellows will get horses and give chase."

This proved to be the case.

Soon the galloping of horses could be heard.

"Ready with your muskets, boys!" said Dick. "We must discourage them and drive them back, if possible!"

The pursuing horsemen were soon close at hand.

As soon as they could be seen, Dick cried out to them to halt or they would be fired upon.

The horsemen did not obey the command, however.

They kept on coming.

Dick gave the order to fire.

The "Liberty Boys" did so.

This did not have the effect of stopping the pursuit, either.

The redcoats kept on coming.

They returned the fire.

The "Liberty Boys" fired two more volleys from their pistols, but they could not stop their pursuers.

"If we can keep them off till we get outside the city limits we will be all right," said Dick; "the boys will be in hand, then, and we will be able to capture the whole gang of redcoats."

"You are right," agreed Bob.

The driver forced the team to do its best.

It held its own with the pursuing horsemen very well, indeed.

The pursuers were close up to the wagon, and one of their number had just called out for those in the wagon to halt and surrender, when the spot where the "Liberty Boys" had been left was reached.

The next instant, in response to a signal from Dick, the "Liberty Boys" attacked the pursuing horsemen.

There was a lively little combat for a few moments, and then the redcoats were forced to surrender.

A number of them had been wounded, as had also a number of the "Liberty Boys."

All the wounded ones were placed in the wagon and then the entire party hastened onward, the prisoners being surrounded by the "Liberty Boys."

They made their way onward all night, and when morning came Dick saw that he had captured a nice lot of redcoats and Tories.

"This is what I should call a double victory, Dick," said Bob; "we have captured the British gold, and the British and Tory guards of the gold as well."

"True, Bob," agreed Dick; "well, I am glad we succeeded. The gold will come in handy."

"So it will."

It was ten o'clock when the party reached Valley Forge. General Washington and Baron Von Steuben were out, drilling the troops.

Dick ranged his prisoners in two rows, with a guard of "Liberty Boys" behind them, and thus they stood when the commander-in-chief and the baron rode up.

Dick stood in front of the prisoners.

He saluted as the two officers rode up.

"Here they are—a nice lot of redcoats and Tories, your excellency," said Dick, indicating the prisoners.

"You have done well, Dick, my boy!" said the commander-in-chief.

#### THE END.

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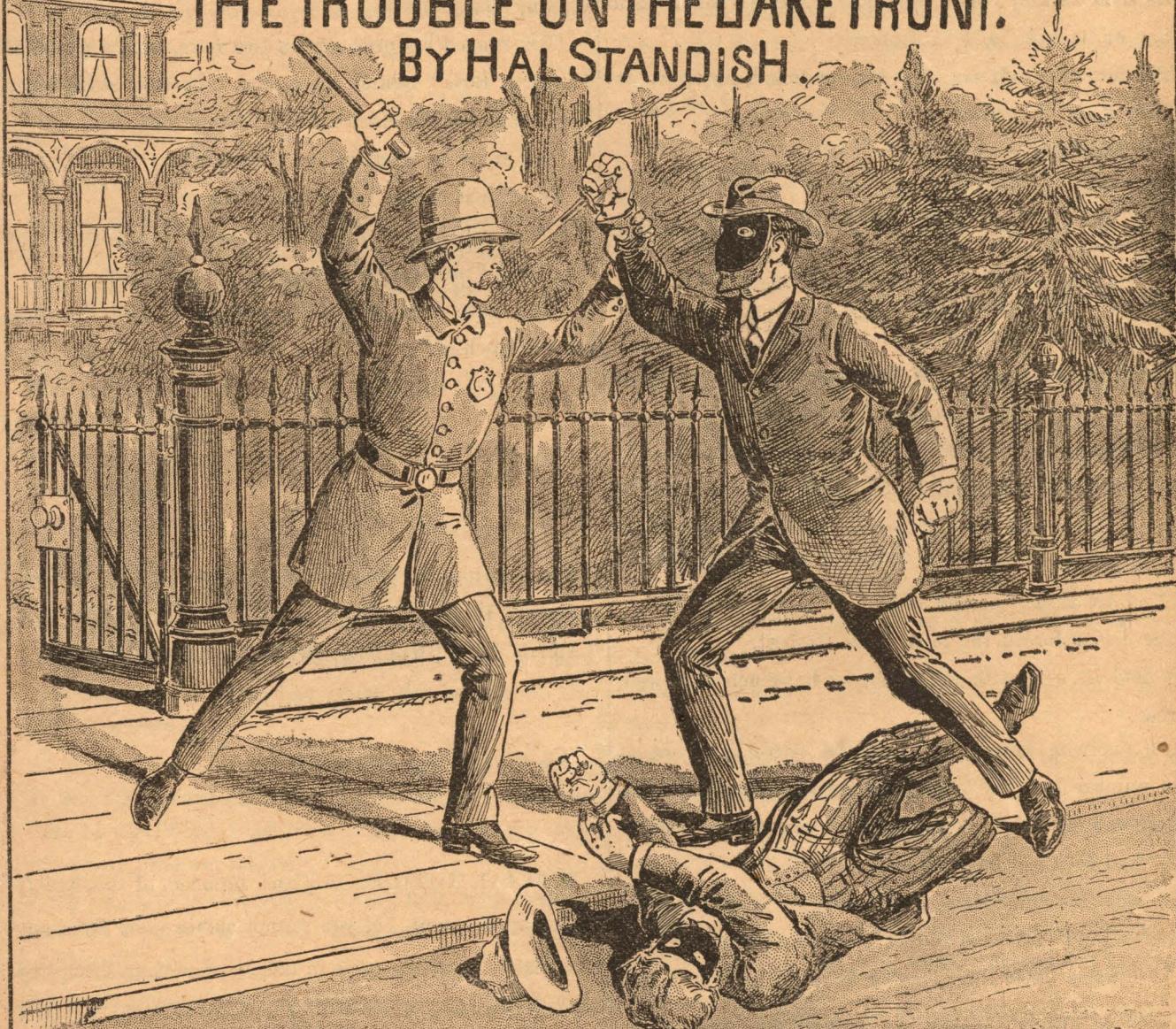
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